Leadership in Water Management – Fall 2021

3 pages maximum, Times New Roman, double spaced, 1-inch margin.
PAPERS THAT DO NOT FOLLOW THIS FORMAT WILL RECEIVE A PENALTY

DUE: THURSDAY, NOV. 4, BEFORE START OF CLASS

Overview:
Each of you will, in pairs, select a water-related topic from an approved list to write a short, objective memorandum as the staff member of a relevant California Water Agency (e.g., State Water Board, Department of Water Resources, City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, office of the Governor) describing the issue, context and relevant history around it, and potential solutions, including benefits or drawbacks to provide information for the agency or deliberative body to take action. The memo should address and explain the background and context of the problem, who the major stakeholders or affected parties are and (if important) briefly their positions/perspectives, and provide an analysis, including clear articulation of potential pros and cons, of different policy or regulatory options for addressing the problem. DO NOT *advocate* for a particular course of action – this is meant to be an objective review of the issue – but be clear whether there are known or suspected benefits or concerns raised by any approach, or whether there may be recognized agreement for a recommended course of action.

Importantly, **your memo should cite to supporting scientific data, cost analyses, or other research to support your conclusions –** dig into the details and look at research on your topic. Instead of saying something will cost "a lot" or have "a huge impact," be specific – how much will it cost? How does that compare to other approaches? What will the specific impact be? To who? Give numbers and data where it's available.

Finally, be clear in the subject header of your memo what agency you are writing to or as a member of.

Our expectation is that the work of researching and writing will be evenly divided between the two of you, but you may organize yourselves however works best for your specific partnership. Make sure you give yourselves time to edit your final product – with two authors you will need time to revise so that your memo uses common terminology, acronyms, grammar, organization… the reader should not be able to tell that your memo was written by two different authors – it should read as one streamlined, coherent piece!

Structure – Your memorandum should have an introduction, body, and conclusion. There are a number of potential formats (see links to guidance at bottom), below is one potential framework for organization and suggested elements.

Introduction
Discuss the environmental issue you are covering, and succinctly explain the context – what the problem is, why it matters, what causes it, what has been done about it to date, who is affected by it, who might care about what solution is being proposed, etc. Then clearly state what solutions or actions are available for the agency to consider.

Body – example framework for discussion:
Present the detail of the issue and full explanation of the potential solutions or actions available to be considered. Discuss the pros and cons of potential actions, as well as possible alternatives. In other words, provide the detail and substance of your specific issue.

Conclusion
In two to three sentences summarize the issue and potential actions, including any preferred pathway or alternative.

You can find an example of an actual **EPA memo here** to give you an idea – but keep in mind this is just one example, and you can find others out there. One thing that would have made this particular memo stronger (and which you should consider for yours) is if the author had provided some quantification of the benefits that are listed instead of just describing them, and if they had included citations for those numbers. There isn't one right way to format your memo though – whatever format you choose, it should be aimed at your chosen audience (which in this case is the agency you are writing to, *not* your professor and TAs!). This is an exercise about how to most suitably present information clearly and concisely as much as it is an exercise in conveying facts objectively.

Links to some other examples or guidance that might be helpful:

http://law.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Policy-Memo-Guidelines-2.pdf

https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/files/hks-communications-program/files/lb_how_to_write_pol_mem_9_08_17.pdf

https://fordschool.umich.edu/writing-center/policy-writing-overview

https://scholar.princeton.edu/sites/default/files/ccameron/files/the_policy_memo_2016.pdf

And from USC, but aside from that could be helpful:
http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/policymemo